

Administrator's Update for 1/4/12
By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

In 2007 Charlotte County submitted an application for a Water Use Permit on the State-owned land located on Babcock Ranch. After several years of discussions and negotiations, the South Florida Water Management District has issued a Water Use Permit for Charlotte County, authorizing the new use of ground water for a secondary public water supply with a maximum-monthly allocation of 93 million gallons and an annual allocation of 372 million gallons, averaging to 3 million gallons per day for up to 4 months/year.

This process began in 2005 and 2006 when the County executed Agreements of the Babcock Ranch with MSKP III, Inc. ("Kitson"), outlining certain steps that could achieve the potential preservation of the vast majority of the Babcock Ranch and the potential development off the remaining portion of the Babcock Ranch. In those Agreements, Kitson and Charlotte County agreed to cooperatively develop the water resources necessary to supply their respective developments.

This Water Use Permit is vital to residents of Charlotte County. We are members of the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, an organization committed to bringing improvements in water reliability for all of its members. Severe drought conditions over the past few years have started to compromise our water supplies and caused salt water intrusion and other environmental conditions to negatively impact the Peace River, our drinking water source. Obtaining this permit is the first step in developing a reliable year-round solution for Charlotte County, which also becomes a regional solution for our partners, as well, allowing us all to continue enjoying the high quality of life associated with living in southwest Florida.

Making it happen

The Charlotte County "Make It Happen" tourism team recently held its first meeting and began reviewing recommendations compiled in September by fourteen separate, focused tourism teams. The fourteen teams of community volunteers met several times throughout the spring and summer to provide tourism marketing recommendations and solutions for strengthening Charlotte County's economy through tourism. This "Make It Happen" team will prioritize, determine a timelines for recommendations, and decide what can be implemented based on available resources and funding.

Senior services

Human services staff attended the quarterly provider meeting conducted by Senior Choices of Southwest Florida (Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida). Topics of discussion included the upcoming request-for-proposal funding cycle for state-funded in-home elder care programs including Community Care for the Elderly, Home Care for the Elderly, and Alzheimer's Disease Initiative. The new funding cycle will be a six-year cycle with annual contract renewals, and will begin with the state fiscal year starting July 1, 2012. Charlotte County human services' senior services division administers these programs and provides case management and support services to over 500 local seniors each year.

Register for Senior Games

The annual Charlotte County "Fit for Life" Senior Games start in early March. Registrations are in full swing, with an early deadline of Feb. 15, 2012. This year's games have over twenty different Olympic-style sports for the participants to choose from. The "Fit for Life" Senior Games focus on athletic competition, camaraderie and recreational opportunities for seniors 50 and over by 12/31/2012. Volunteers are also needed to help with the games. Find forms and more information at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com or call the Harold Avenue Recreation Center at 941.627.1074 or 941.625.PLAY (7529).

Employment skill classes

Our county library system has formed a partnership with Southwest Florida Works to offer a menu of support classes including resume workshops, job search skills, interview skills, beginning internet and many other job skill sessions. This program is sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and funded by the Library Services and Technology Act. For more information contact any County library.